

Arizona Criminal Justice Commission



Arizona Youth Survey 2012 Data Brief

Our mission is to sustain and enhance the coordination, cohesiveness, productivity and effectiveness of the criminal justice system in Arizona

March 2013

Table 1: Percent of Arizona Students Who Have Used Drugs in Their Lifetime

	8th Grade	10th Grade	12th Grade	Total
Alcohol	37.3	59.1	69.2	51.7
Cigarettes	19.7	31.7	42.1	28.8
Smokeless Tobacco	4.5	9.3	14.7	8.4
Marijuana	16.2	34.7	44.8	28.7
Inhalants	11.4	9.4	7.4	9.8
Hallucinogens	1.7	5.2	8.4	4.4
Cocaine	1.5	3.9	7.4	3.7
Sedatives	4.4	8.0	10.0	6.9
Methamphetamines	0.6	1.5	1.8	1.2
Stimulants	2.0	6.6	9.9	5.3
Ecstasy	2.8	7.4	10.4	6.1
Heroin	0.7	1.4	1.8	1.2
Steroids	1.5	1.8	1.9	1.7
Prescription Pain Relievers	8.8	15.6	20.7	13.8
Prescription Drugs	11.1	18.8	23.9	16.6
Over-the-Counter Drugs	7.0	10.6	12.2	9.3
Other Club Drugs	1.9	2.5	3.1	2.4
Synthetic Drugs (Bath Salts, Spice, etc.)	6.9	11.1	13.9	9.9

Table 2: Percent of Arizona Students Who Have Used Drugs in the Past 30-Days

	8th Grade	10th Grade	12th Grade	Total
Alcohol	17.1	32.1	43.5	28.1
Cigarettes	7.8	14.0	21.0	12.9
Smokeless Tobacco	2.1	3.9	6.6	3.8
Marijuana	7.7	17.7	22.5	14.3
Inhalants	4.2	2.0	1.3	2.8
Hallucinogens	0.7	1.7	2.3	1.4
Cocaine	0.6	1.2	2.1	1.1
Sedatives	1.9	3.3	3.2	2.7
Methamphetamines	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.4
Stimulants	0.9	2.7	3.0	2.0
Ecstasy	0.9	1.7	2.0	1.4
Heroin	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.4
Steroids	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.6
Prescription Pain Relievers	4.5	7.3	7.9	6.2
Prescription Drugs	5.7	9.3	10.0	7.9
Over-the-Counter Drugs	4.0	4.9	4.3	4.4
Other Club Drugs	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.6
Synthetic Drugs (Bath Salts, Spice, etc.)	3.8	5.0	5.2	4.5

The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC) conducts a statewide, biennial survey with technical assistance from Bach Harrison, LLC to estimate the prevalence of drug use and other risky behaviors among Arizona 8th, 10th, and 12th grade youth and inquire about the circumstances in which they live. The Arizona Youth Survey (AYS) is a school-based survey that was successfully implemented in 2012 across 349 schools in all 15 Arizona counties resulting in a final sample size of 62,817 youth. This ACJC data brief summarizes the primary findings from the 2012 AYS.

Substance Use Among Arizona Youth

Alcohol continues to be the most used substance among youth in Arizona across all grades, with 37.3% of 8th graders, 59.1% of 10th graders, and 69.2% of 12th graders reporting having consumed alcohol at least once in their lifetime. For substance use in the 30-days prior to taking the survey, alcohol was again the most widely used, with 17.1% of 8th graders, 32.1% of 10th graders, and 43.5% of 12th graders reporting use. As is evident with alcohol, rates of substance use among youth tend to be higher among older youth compared to younger youth (Tables 1 and 2). An exception to this pattern can be seen in rates of inhalant use where 8th grade youth have higher rates of lifetime and past 30 day use than 10th and 12th grade youth. Note that the synthetic drug and other club drug categories contained in Chart 1 and Tables 1 and 2 were added in the 2012 survey.

The five substances that have the highest percentages of lifetime and 30-day use among Arizona youth are alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, prescription pain relievers, and synthetics (e.g., bath salts, spice, etc). To illustrate the relationship between substance use and gender, Chart 1 shows the lifetime and 30 day usage rates of the five highest used drugs by gender. The rates of substance use for males and females are generally similar to one another. Nevertheless, among the five substances that are used by the highest percentage of Arizona youth, females report slightly higher rates of use than males for alcohol and prescription pain relievers.

Chart 1: Lifetime and 30-day ATOD use by Gender



Antisocial Behavior

The 2012 AYS also asked students if they participated in several types of antisocial and delinquent behavior during the 12 months prior to taking the survey (Table 3). Nearly one out of every six youth in 2012 reported engaging in binge drinking (i.e., five or more alcoholic drinks in a row) and nearly one of every six reported going to school while drunk or high. Approximately one of seven 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students reported being hit, slapped, pushed, shoved, kicked or physically assaulted in another way by a teen dating partner.

Table 3: Percent of Youth Engaged in Heavy Substance Use and Antisocial Behavior

	8th Grade				10th Grade				12th Grade				Total			
	2006	2008	2010	2012	2006	2008	2010	2012	2006	2008	2010	2012	2006	2008	2010	2012
Binge Drinking	13.4	13.1	12.4	8.7	22.4	22.4	21.0	17.5	28.2	30.2	29.2	26.5	19.9	19.9	19.5	15.7
Suspended From School	19.8	20.2	18.5	17.0	15.5	14.6	14.4	12.1	9.4	10.2	9.9	8.9	16.0	16.2	15.0	13.6
Drunk or High at School	13.0	12.0	12.8	10.4	21.1	20.5	21.8	19.8	21.4	22.2	22.1	21.6	17.6	16.9	18.0	15.9
Sold Illegal Drugs	4.9	4.6	5.0	4.5	9.1	9.8	10.6	9.8	9.8	10.4	10.8	10.8	7.4	7.5	8.2	7.6
Stolen a Vehicle	4.6	3.6	3.7	2.1	4.7	3.7	4.6	2.6	3.1	2.7	3.1	2.0	4.3	3.4	3.8	2.2
Been Arrested	8.3	7.5	7.1	5.5	9.3	9.2	9.9	7.0	7.8	8.7	8.7	7.0	8.5	8.3	8.4	6.3
Carried a Handgun	7.6	7.7	6.7	5.7	7.5	7.2	7.6	5.2	7.0	8.1	7.2	5.9	7.7	7.7	7.1	5.6
Dating Violence	N/A	N/A	17.2	14.6	N/A	N/A	18.1	13.1	N/A	N/A	16.4	12.3	N/A	N/A	17.3	13.6

Gang Activity

Youth respondents were also asked about current or past gang affiliation. As in previous years, the majority of Arizona youth, 94.3% in 2012, reported never belonging to a gang. Only 1.8% of respondents reported currently belonging to a gang, although 1.2% of youth reported wanting to join a gang. Of the youth who reported being gang involved, 30.6% joined for protection and 25.6% joined for friendship.

School Safety

The 2012 AYS asked several questions about students' experiences related to school safety (Table 4). For example, nearly one of every three youth reported being bullied at least once in the 12 months prior to taking the survey. Similarly, nearly one in six youth reported not feeling safe at their school. In addition, nearly 13% of youth reported being in a fight at school at least once in the previous 12 months and 9.1% reported being threatened with a weapon (e.g., gun, knife, or club). Smaller percentages of youth reported taking a weapon to school in the previous 30 days (5.3%) and taking a handgun to school in the previous 12 months (1.2%). The cyber-bullying question seen at the bottom of Table 4 was added in the 2012 survey. Slightly more than one in four youth reported harassment online or through electronic devices.

Table 4: Students' Responses to School Safety & Cyber Bullying Questions

	8th Grade				10th Grade				12th Grade				Total			
	2006	2008	2010	2012	2006	2008	2010	2012	2006	2008	2010	2012	2006	2008	2010	2012
Taken a Handgun to School in Past Year	1.6	1.2	1.4	1.0	1.6	1.3	2.1	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.8	1.3	1.6	1.3	1.7	1.2
In a Fight at School at Least Once in the Past Year	25.6	23.5	20.5	17.3	15.7	14.8	13.0	10.3	8.9	8.5	7.4	7.0	18	17.4	14.8	12.7
I Do Not Feel Safe at My School	25.3	23.5	20.0	18.8	23.5	22.6	18.2	16.0	17.1	18.2	13.3	11.5	22.8	22.0	17.6	16.2
Did Not Go to School at Least One Day in the Past Month Because Felt Unsafe At School or On the Way to School	10.7	10.1	9.5	7.9	7.8	8.9	6.7	5.4	5.0	6.2	4.3	4.2	8.4	8.8	7.3	6.2
Carried a Weapon to School at Least Once in the Past 30 Days	6.9	6.1	4.8	5.2	7.3	6.2	5.0	5.5	6.0	5.6	4.6	5.5	6.8	6.0	4.8	5.3
Been Threatened or Injured With a Weapon on School Property in the Past Year	15.5	12.9	8.3	11.1	13.9	11.6	7.3	8.5	9.5	7.6	4.7	6.1	13.6	11.3	7.0	9.1
Been Bullied at Least Once in the Past Year	38.2	40.6	39.5	39.9	24.5	30.9	26.9	27.4	14.3	17.7	14.6	17.1	28.2	32.3	29.1	30.7
Been Harassed or Mistreated Online or Through Electronic Device in Past Year	N/A	N/A	N/A	28.9	N/A	N/A	N/A	26.2	N/A	N/A	N/A	21.3	N/A	N/A	N/A	26.3

Risk and Protective Factors

In addition to questions about substance use, antisocial and delinquent activity, and school safety, the 2012 AYS also captures information on the risk and protective factors to which Arizona youth are exposed. The risk and protective factors included in the survey are categorized in four important areas of a youth's life: 1) community 2) family 3) school and 4) the peer and individual domains. An understanding of the risk and protective factors affecting youth informs prevention strategies in order to better target risk factors that are unacceptably high and protective factors that are unacceptably low.

This fact sheet was prepared by:
Steve Irvine, Research Analyst
Arizona Criminal Justice Commission
1110 W. Washington, Suite 230
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
(P) 602.364.1173
(F) 602.364.1175
 Review full report at: www.azcjc.gov